NUMB. XXVIII.

The GUARDIAN.

Ætas Parentum pejor Avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitioſiorem. Hor.

Monday, April 13. 1713.

THEOCRITUS, *Bion* and *Moſchus* are the moſt famous amongſt the *Greek* Writers of Paſtorals. The two latter of theſe are judged to be far ſhort of *Theocritus*, whom I ſhall ſpeak of more largely, becauſe he rivals the greateſt of all Poets, *Virgil* himſelf. He hath the Advantage confeſſedly of the *Latin*, in coming before him, and writing in a Tongue more proper for Paſtoral. The Softneſs of the *Doriek* Dialect, which this Poet is ſaid to have improved beyond any who came before him, is what the Ancient *Roman* Writers owned their Language could not approach. But beſides this Beauty, he ſeems to me to have had a Soul more ſoftly and tenderly inclined to this way of Writing than *Virgil*; whoſe Genius led him naturally to Sublimity. It is true that the great *Roman*, by the Niceneſs of his Judgment, and great Command of himſelf, hath acquitted himſelf dexterouſly this way. But a penetrating Judge will find there the Seeds of that Fire which burned afterwards ſo bright in the *Georgicks*, and blazed out in the *Æneid*. I muſt not, however, diſſemble that theſe bold Strokes appear chiefly in thoſe Eclogues of *Virgil*, which ought not to be numbered amongſt his Paſtorals, which are indeed generally thought to be all of the Paſtoral kind; but by the beſt Judges are only called his Select Poems, as the Word *Eclogue* originally means.

Thoſe who will take the Pains to conſult *Scaliger*'s Compariſon of theſe two Poets, will find that *Theocritus* hath out-done him in thoſe very Paſſages which the Critick hath produced in honour of *Virgil*. There is, in ſhort, more Innocence, Simplicity, and whatever elſe hath been laid down as the diſtinguiſhing Marks of Paſtoral, in the *Greek* than the *Roman*; and all Arguments from the Exactneſs, Propriety, Conciſeneſs and Nobleneſs of *Virgil* may very well be turned againſt him. There is indeed ſometimes a Groſſneſs and Clowniſhneſs in *Theocritus*, which *Virgil*, who borrowed his greateſt Beauties from him, hath avoided. I will however add, that *Virgil*, out of the Excellence of Genius only, hath come ſhort of *Theocritus*; and had poſſibly excelled him, if in greater Subjects he had not been born to excel all Mankind.

The *Italians* were the firſt, amongſt the Moderns, that fell into Paſtoral Writing. It is obſerved, that the People of that Nation are very profound and abſtruſe

(Price Two Pence.)

abſtruſe in their Poetry as well as Politicks; fond of ſurpriſing Conceits and far-fetched Imaginations, and labour chiefly to ſay what was never ſaid before. From Perſons of this Character, how can we expect that Air of Simplicity and Truth which hath been proved ſo eſſential to Shepherds. There are two Paſtoral Plays in this Language, which they boaſt of as the moſt elegant Performances in Poetry that the latter Ages have produced; the *Aminta* of *Taſſo*, and *Guarini*'s *Paſtor Fido*. In theſe the Names of the Perſons are indeed Paſtoral, and the *Sylvan* Gods, the *Dryads*, and the *Satyrs* appointed with the Equipage of Antiquity; but neither their Language, Sentiments, Paſſions or Deſigns like thoſe of the Pretty Triflers in *Virgil* and *Theocritus*. I ſhall produce an Example out of each, which are commonly taken notice of, as Patterns of the *Italian* way of Thinking in Paſtoral. *Sylvia* in *Taſſo*'s Poem enters adorned with a Garland of Flowers, and views herſelf in a Fountain with ſuch Self-admiration, that ſhe breaks out into a Speech to the Flowers on her Head, and tells them, *ſhe doth not wear them to adorn her ſelf, but to make them aſhamed.* In the *Paſtor Fido*, a Shepherdeſs reaſons after an abſtruſe Philoſophical manner about the Violence of Love, and expoſtulates with the Gods, *for making Laws ſo rigorous to reſtrain us, and at the ſame time giving us invincible Deſires.* Whoever can bear theſe, may be aſſured he hath no Taſte for Paſtoral.

When I am ſpeaking of the *Italians*, it would be unpardonable to paſs by *Sannazarius*. He hath changed the Scene in this kind of Poetry from Woods and Lawns, to the barren Beach and boundleſs Ocean; introduces Sea-calves in the room of Kids and Lambs, Sea-mews for the Lark and the Linnet, and preſents his Miſtreſs with Oyſters inſtead of Fruits and Flowers. How good ſoever his Stile and Thoughts may be; yet who can pardon him for his Arbitrary Change of the ſweet Manners and pleaſing Objects of the Country, for what in their own Nature are uncomfortable and dreadful? I think he hath few or no Followers, or if any, ſuch as knew little of his Beauties, and only copied his Faults, and ſo are loſt and forgotten.

The *French* are ſo far from thinking abſtruſely, that they often ſeem not to think at all. It is all a Run of Numbers, Commonplace Deſcriptions of Woods, Floods, Gloves, Loves, &c. Thoſe who write the moſt accurately fall into the Manner of their Country, which is Gallantry. I cannot better illuſtrate what I would ſay of the *French*, than by the Dreſs in which they make their Shepherds appear in their Paſtoral Interludes upon the Stage, as I find it deſcribed by a celebrated Author. "The "Shepherds, ſaith he, are all embroidered, and "acquit themſelves in a Ball better than our *Engliſh* Dancing-Maſters. I have ſeen a Couple of "Rivers appear in Red Stockings; and *Alpheus*, inſtead of having his Head covered with Sedges "and Bull-ruſhes, making Love in a fair full-bottomed Perriwig and a Plume of Feathers; but "with a Voice ſo full of Shakes and Quavers, "that I ſhould have thought the Murmurs of a "Country Brook the much more agreeable Muſick.

This Paper is to be had of Mr. Yemes *under the* Thatch'd-houſe *Tavern in St.* James's-ſtreet; *Mrs.* Bond *at* Charing-croſs; *Mrs.* Bolter *near the* Temple-gate; *and Mr.* Round *in* Exchange-Ally.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Juſt Publiſhed,

The Tories defeated: Or, The Doctor almoſt a Chriſtian, illuſtrated from ſeveral Paſſages in the Act of Grace he paſs'd upon his Enemies at St. Saviour's. pr. 3d. The Lives of John Duke of Marlborough and Francis Eugene Prince of Savoy, with both their Effigies engrav'd by Mr. Vander Gucht. pr. 4s. What has been may be, &c. To which is added, The Trial of the ſeven Biſhops, &c. pr. 1s. A Letter to a Member of P------t, occaſioned by the French King's Grant to Mr. Crozat, in relation to the South-Sea Trade, pr. 6d. Sold by J. Baker in Peter-Noſter-Row.

Books lately Printed for Jacob Tonſon, at Shakeſpear's Head againſt Catherine Street in the Strand. The ſecond Edition of a Poem, Intituled, Rural Sports. Written by Mr. Gay. Inſcribed to Mr. Pope. Opera & Fragmenta veterum Poetarum Latinorum Profanorum & Eccleſiaſticorum, Duobus Voluminibus comprehenſa. Creation. A Philoſophical Poem, Demonſtrating the Exiſtence and Providence of a God. In ſeven Books. By Sir Richard Blackmore, Kt. M. D. and Fellow of the Royal College of Phyſicians in London. The ſecond Edition. Poems upon ſeveral Occaſions, by the Right Honourable George Granville, Lord Lanſdown. The Works of Mr. Thomas Otway, in two Volumes. Conſiſting of his Plays, Poems, and Love-Letters. A Poem to his Excellency the Lord Privy Seal, on the Proſpect of Peace, by Mr Tickell. The Fourth Edition. An Ode to the Creator of the World, Occaſion'd by the Fragments of Orpheus. The ſecond Edition. Chriſtus Patiens, Carmen Heroicum. The Careleſs Husband. A Comedy, written by Mr. Cibber. Price 6d. Tatlers in 4 Volumes, 8vo and 12mo. Spectators in 4 Volumes, 8vo and 12mo. N. B. The three laſt Volumes of the Spectator are juſt Publiſhed.

LONDON: Printed for *J. Tonſon* in the *Strand*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in. 1713.